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UNCLAS ABU DHABI 000319

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: SPECIAL MEDIA REACTION: ANGER AT DANISH CARTOON

1. SUMMARY: "AL-KHALEEJ" CALLED UPON MUSLIMS AND ARABS TO REACT AGAINST ENTITIES TARGETING THEIR SACRED SYMBOLS. A UAE COLUMNIST SAYS THE DANISH MOCKERY OF THE PROPHET MOHAMMED HAS AWAKENED THE MUSLIMS' SENSE OF IDENTITY AND UNIFIED THEM TOGETHER. END SUMMARY.

2. Under the headline "Attacking the sacred symbols", Sharjah-based Pan-Arab daily "Al Khaleej," (circulation 85,000) 1/30 wrote:

"... TO JUSTIFY ATTACKING ISLAMIC SYMBOLS SUCH AS THE PROPHET MOHAMMED UNDER THE PRETEXT OF FREEDOM OF OPINION AND SPEECH IS UNACCEPTABLE AND DEPLORABLE. ALL THE HEAVENLY RELIGIONS, ALONG WITH THEIR PROPHETS AND MESSENGERS, ARE SACRED SYMBOLS... IF JUDAISM OR ANY OTHER RELIGION WAS EXPOSED TO SUCH SLANDER, WOULD IT BE COMPLETELY IGNORED? NO. THE WHOLE WORLD WOULD CONDEMN THE ACT. MUSLIMS AND ARABS ARE REQUIRED TO DEFEND THEIR SACRED SYMBOLS..."

3. Under the headline "Every cloud has a silver lining", a UAE columnist, Adel Mohamed Al-Rashed, wrote in Abu Dhabi-based Arabic daily "Emaratallyoum," (circulation 30,000) 1/31:

"...The Danish mockery of the Prophet Mohammed has helped increase our sense of self-awareness and our identity at a time where such feelings seem to have diminished... The Danish mockery has directed us to share the same feelings and reactions of our governments and official authorities in the Islamic countries and stand side by side with them... On the occasion of Prophet Mohamed's immigration, the best way to react to such attacks and slanders is to remember our prophet's lessons, educate ourselves with his sacrifices, and pray to God for peace on mankind."

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